

Murfreesboro City Schools

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Approved: May 14, 2021

This Foundational Literacy Skills Plan has been approved by the Tennessee Department of Education and meets the requirements of the *Tennessee Literacy Success Act*. All portions of the Foundational Literacy Skills plan were submitted to the department and approved. To view the supplemental artifacts, please contact the district directly.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades K-2

MCS District uses a researched based curriculum, grounded in the science of reading for grades K-2nd. The foundation skills curriculum is used district wide for K-2 classrooms and has a daily, one-hour block for foundational skills instruction. The Expeditionary Education curriculum is aligned to Tennessee ELA standards and is on the state approved list from the Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission.

MCS foundation skills block includes activities which include on grade level targeted activities for phonological/phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency and vocabulary instruction and the use of decodable text to support application of skills and comprehension, for both whole group and differentiated small groups.

MCS uses Expeditionary Learning as our foundational skills curriculum. The curriculum is based on Linnea Ehri's phases of reading and spelling development. The word development and spelling phases are broken into microphases, which support teachers with specific, targeted phonics skills (both for encoding and decoding). The foundational skills curriculum is direct, explicit and sequential in nature. Teachers are guided to focus on the specific strengths and needs of the learner, based on the students' current microphase rather than identify a student based on his/her 'reading level'. Explicit, systematic phonics instruction is the cornerstone to the foundational skills block curriculum with a strong emphasis on incremental instructional steps, ensuring instructional gaps do not occur.

For example, mid-year in the first grade skills block curriculum, students are beginning to syllabicate two syllable words, following basic patterns. First graders are introduced to syllable types (open, closed and silent e). See example lessons sequence.

*The only adjustment to the current foundational skills curriculum will be to provide more specific, sequential phonological/phonemic awareness professional development for our K-2 teachers. A planned district wide (Pre-K-2nd grade) Michael Heggerty phonological awareness professional development will be provided to support teacher understanding and use of the phonological awareness curriculum. The professional development will include Michael Heggerty manual and model lesson videos for teachers to refer to throughout the year for instructional supports/scaffolds. We have found Expeditionary Learning Foundational Skills curriculum needs

more emphasis for explicit, systematic phonological and phonemic awareness work, covering phonological and phonemic awareness skills such as rhyming on onset fluency, isolating final and medial sounds, blending and segmenting sounds, adding and deleting phonemes and substituting phonemes. In addition to the PA professional developments and teacher follow-ups, teachers will be provided with additional phonological resources such as David and Meredith Liben's site: ReadingDoneRight.org and the TNDOE Foundational Skills Curriculum supplement sites, which continue the work of sequential, systematic and explicit phonological awareness instruction. We will continue to support teachers with the Expeditionary Learning curriculum, ensuring we are using the curriculum with integrity—using the end of cycle and benchmark assessments accurately and with fidelity. Teachers will be trained how to use the data from the foundation skills benchmarks to make the best instructional decisions, both for whole group and small group instruction.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

MCS District has an integrated literacy block for grades 3rd – 5th grades and uses a researched based curriculum, grounded in the science of reading. The Expeditionary Education curriculum is aligned to Tennessee ELA standards and is on the state approved list from the Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission.

MCS 3rd – 5th grade ELA block includes activities, which include on grade level targeted activities for morphology, spelling, writing and fluency. A minimum of 60 minutes (embedded within the knowledge building content and the ALL Block/small group instruction) addresses foundation skills instruction. Teachers were provided with the EL ED ALL BLOCK small group curriculum, which addresses grammar usage and mechanics, targeted writing instruction, word study (advanced phonics/fluency), vocabulary (morphology) and comprehension.

In addition, this year third grade teachers were provided a 'flex curriculum' from the EL Ed curriculum, which addressed the foundation skills 'gap' due to loss of instruction from the Spring of 2020. Teachers were able to use the flex curriculum in small group instruction to address student foundation skills needs.

For example, our fourth grade students are now beginning the domain on The Nineteenth Amendment. They begin by briefly activating prior knowledge and read independently and/or aloud. After the daily read aloud or independent reading in on-grade level, complex text, the students summarize the content (via a talk structure), complete "word work"—see example below), respond to a series of questions, and write a response to a question that requires students to pull evidence from the text to support their answer. For example, in vocabulary lessons teachers provide explicit support for vocabulary needed to access the complex text. In one lesson, the students study the affix 'tion' to support word meaning and comprehension of the text. Students use their word knowledge as they engage in group discussion and writing activities. Therefore, foundational skills instruction is embedded in all aspects of their 90-minute block and is dedicated to developing students' holistic literacy approach to fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

A specific example, mid-year in the fourth grade skills within the ALL BLOCK curriculum, students are looking closely at morphemes within words to support word level and text level comprehension.

Students address the use of affixes as clues to the meanings of words.

*There are currently no plans to change or supplement the EL ED 3rd – 5th grade curriculum although there will continue to be additional year- long professional developments which support teacher clarity and implementation of the curriculum with integrity.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

Open Up - K-5 Expeditionary Learning

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

Open Up - K-5 Expeditionary Learning

Additional Information about Instructional Materials

Our district has adopted an approved curriculum for ELA instruction; however, we have chosen to supplement K-2nd for phonological and phonemic awareness. Our district will use Michael Heggerty's Phonological/Phonemic Awareness Curriculum (per state approval) to enhance the EL Ed curriculum and support phonics instruction. This supplement allows us to focus more deeply on the phonological awareness and advanced phonemic awareness skills that are crucial for success Pre-K through second grade. We will use the daily sounds-first activities as our daily warm up, both whole group and small group, in all schools across the district.

Universal Reading Screener for Grades K-5. This screener complies with RTI² and Say Dyslexia requirements.

Currently, we use aimswebPlus as our universal screener and progress-monitoring tool for K-5 reading. aimswebPlus meets the criteria for the dyslexia screening requirements. We are currently discussing the use of the iReady Reading as our screener for the 2021-22 school year with aimsweb as the diagnostic and progress monitoring tool.

Intervention Structure and Supports

In the fall, students will be given a universal screener (iReady Reading) to determine which students have a significant reading deficiency or are "at-risk". MCS has data team members with several school stakeholders (interventionists, grade-level teachers, instructional coaches, administrators, school psychologists) who review the universal screener data to determine which students score between the 0-25th percentile AND indicate a skill deficit. Those students demonstrating an area of need are classified as in need of Tier II or Tier III instruction. Students classified as Tier II or Tier III are given a survey level diagnostic assessment (aimswebPlus) to determine specific deficits in order to best assign students to a small group with an intervention that will narrow skill gaps. Students receive daily, intervention instruction for at least 45 minutes in their area of greatest deficit. We have research-based options for reading intervention support available to our students who are "at-risk" and/or who are identified with a significant reading deficiency. Our recently adopted ELA curriculum contains an assessment and remediation guide in which teachers can find activities that

directly address skill gaps. They can tailor this to the needs of their RTI group of students. If the intervention does not indicate effectiveness over time, more comprehensive, strategic interventions (such as SPIRE) become an option. Students will be progress monitoring using aimswebPlus.

Data teams meet every 4 ½ weeks to determine if a change in the intervention or the person providing the intervention is needed. The data team also looks at other variables (attendance, engagement, historical data) as part of the decision making process before a change is made to the programming or provider. Students receive explicit instruction in their area of deficit in small groups using research-based materials and strategies.

When requested by a stakeholder(s), students are also screened using additional survey level assessments to determine if they have characteristics of dyslexia. Students who do demonstrate those characteristics receive intensive intervention as outlined in the Say Dyslexia Law using programs that meet the law's requirements. Our district uses a research-based supplemental program as one intervention for students with characteristics of dyslexia. Our district notifies families of students who demonstrate characteristics of dyslexia. Families are notified of the curriculum used to support those students, as it is based on a multi-sensory approach of systematic, explicit, sequential, phonics-based instruction and is considered a strong support for students. Intervention takes place daily during a grade-level time in the master schedule just for RTI. When students are in their RTI groups, they work on activities and assignments that make them stronger in that skill area. For example, students who need instruction in comprehension may read a new text and answer scaffolded questions, all related to the knowledge-building unit they are studying in Tier I instruction. Student skill needs are addressed by some of the following: Tools4Reading (based on 95Percent), 95 Percent Phonological Awareness Lessons, Lexia, Lexia Skillbuilders, TNFSCS Foundation Skills and SPIRE. All interventions listed are explicit and systematic and researched based and grounded in the science of reading. Most of the interventions listed have a multisensory approach. MCS interventionists will receive additional professional development/book study for phonological awareness instruction using Michael Heggerty's text/manual: Bridge the Gap: Intervention Lessons (for students needing PA instruction in grades 2+), which will be different from Tier 1 PA work (per approval by the state).

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

MCS notifies parents in grades K-5 if their child is "at-risk" for or has a significant reading deficit (as evidenced by students scoring in the 0-25th percentile AND having historical data indicating a need for additional services) immediately after the district's schools complete the fall universal screening. Students' scores are communicated in parent-friendly language that provides a clear explanation of student skill gaps and the depth and extent of student needs. The parents are told what intervention their student will receive and the amount of time each day the student will receive services. This is coupled with a description of the importance of being able to read by the end of 3rd grade. The district defines how students are assessed and what a "significant reading deficit" means. Parents are subsequently notified of their child's progress, or lack of progress, after the 4 ½ week data team meetings. In the parent notifications/communication, data teams note any changes being made if the child is not showing sufficient progress, as evidenced by progress monitoring and universal

screening data as well as recommended activities (that do not require purchased resources) that will support students in the area of deficit. These communications go out to parents with students in grades K-3 three times annually and are shared in grades 4 and 5 annually.

MCS has also subscribed to the Ready4K text messaging program which encourages and provides parents of Pre-K-3rd grades with ideas and activities to support student receptive and expressive language/vocabulary and early literacy skills. Parents receive texts three times per week to support their Pre-K-3rd grade student. These texts emphasize the importance of supporting their child with language acquisition skills along with early literacy skills.

Professional Development Plan

MCS teachers will participate in the free and optional Reading 360 Early Literacy Training series developed by the Tennessee Department of Education. Our plan for providing PD for all K-5 teachers is as follows:

April 2021 – Twenty five percent (plus) teachers of grades in grades K through 2nd, along with interventionists, coaches and ESL teachers, will engage in Week 1 of the Early Literacy Training series, asynchronously. This training will focus on foundational reading development and instruction and is grounded in a phonics-based approach. We will ensure that participating educators earn a completion certificate prior to starting Week 2 work in June.

June 2021 – Our district has registered for the cohort-based, in-person training offered as Week 2 of the Early Literacy Training series for all teachers in grade K through second grades. The participating teachers will also include interventionists and elementary instructional coaches. This week will emphasize practical classroom application of research findings around strong instruction in phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary. We will plan to include grade three through five during the summer of June 2022.

In addition, MCS will continue to provide many professional developments offered throughout the school year (2021-22) to deepen teacher understanding and efficacy of instructional foundational skills practices using the Expeditionary Learning Foundational Skills curriculum.

May 27 and 28 K-5 teachers will be trained to teach foundational skills (K-2 systematic and explicit/3-5 systematic and integrated) for summer school, assessing and addressing foundational skill deficits for each child. Expeditionary Learning foundational skills curriculum will be the focus for Tier 1 instruction while a reading intervention framework addressing the simple view of reading and Reading Rope will be used to address students in Tier 2 and Tier 3 during the intervention block.

June 1-4 K-2 teachers, instructional coaches and interventionists will participate in TNDOE Early Literacy with trainers from state hired vendor (addressing phonological awareness, phonics and fluency). An the end of these sessions, quick assessments will be provided.

July (specific dates TBA) 3-5 grade teachers will receive Expeditionary Learning ALL Block (small groups) professional development from Better Lessons Professional Development trainers

(addressing module lessons along with differentiation to address student morphology, vocabulary, and fluency)

July 28 and 29 K-6 teachers will receive a two-day professional development, which offers several reading sessions. The sessions address phonological awareness, phonics, morphology, spelling, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. The sessions will be offered by Central Office personnel and instructional coaches within the district.

July, August, Sept. (specific dates TBA) Phonological Awareness training with Michael Heggerty vendor and materials/manuals. All Pre-K-2nd grade teachers will receive training to address on grade level phonological awareness skills which support later/current phonics instruction. Teachers will be provided a 'clarity check'/supports needed at the end of the session(s).

July-October and January-March (specific dates TBA) Pre K-3 teachers will participate in the six series class of the Science of Reading/LETRS training addressing PA, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, morphology and comprehension. There will be two cohorts of 30 teachers in each cohort. The first cohort of teachers will attend sessions during the months of July, August, Sept. and October. The *second cohort of teachers will attend sessions during the months of January, Feb. and March. The sessions will be offered by the district reading coordinator/reading specialist. An end of training assessment will be provided to check for understanding of content and implementation practices.

*2nd cohort--Jan., Feb. & March.